

Hospitalizations

In 1997, San Diego County had 35 licensed hospitals with nearly 7,800 beds – about one bed for every 349 San Diego County residents. Nearly one in ten San Diego County residents (267,000 people) were hospitalized during 1997.

The two most common reasons for hospitalization were normal delivery of a newborn followed by psychoses. Other common reasons for hospitalization included heart failure, pneumonia and strokes. The average costs of percutaneous cardiovascular procedures far exceeded the average costs for other leading causes of hospitalization.

The most common surgical procedure was cesarean section. Other common procedures included circumcisions, hysterectomies, appendectomies and gall bladder removals. However, when one considers the costs associated with surgical procedures, coronary angioplasty was most costly with an average charge of \$33,246 per stay.

Reasons for Hospitalizations Among San Diego County Residents, 1997

Diagnosis	Number of Hospitalizations	Average Length of Stay (Days)	Average Charge Per Stay
Normal delivery	29,042	1.6	\$ 4,471
Psychoses	12,427	10.8	\$ 9,588
Cesarean section	7,683	3.4	\$ 9,351
Heart failure	6,016	6.4	\$12,173
Adult pneumonia	4,609	8.1	\$13,231
Cerebrovascular disorders (incl. stroke)	4,460	13.1	\$15,400
Joint procedures, leg	4,258	4.4	\$25,760
Chronic lung disease (COPD)	3,522	6.4	\$12,567
Percutaneous cardiovascular procedures	3,479	2.8	\$33,094
GI hemorrhage	2,789	4.1	\$10,725

Source: California Office of Statewide Planning and Development, 1997 Patient Discharge Data.

Most Common Surgical Procedures Among Hospitalized Patients in San Diego County, 1997

Procedure	Number of Hospitalizations	Average Length of Stay (Days)	Average Charge Per Stay
Cesarean section	7,683	3.4	\$ 9,351
Circumcision	4,617	1.9	\$ 1,549
Laposcopic cholecystectomy	2,891	2.7	\$14,752
Coronary angioplasty	2,630	2.8	\$33,246
Abdominal hysterectomy	2,277	3.1	\$11,601
Appendectomy	2,133	3.1	\$12,019
Knee replacement	1,966	4.0	\$25,337
Disc removal	1,324	2.4	\$14,064
Surgical repair/leg fracture	1,318	5.3	\$24,791
Wound debridement	1,173	8.8	\$31,562

Source: California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development, 1997 Patient Discharge Data.



Insurance Coverage

Health insurance is the avenue to health care. People with health insurance are more likely to have a main provider of primary care and receive preventative care. Among the 2.8 million residents of San Diego County, approximately one quarter are without health insurance coverage. This compares to California and nationwide estimates of 21% and 16%, respectively⁹. If San Diego County were a state, it would rank fifth in the rate of uninsured following Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and Arkansas and tied with Louisiana. The common profile of an uninsured San Diego County resident is likely to be:

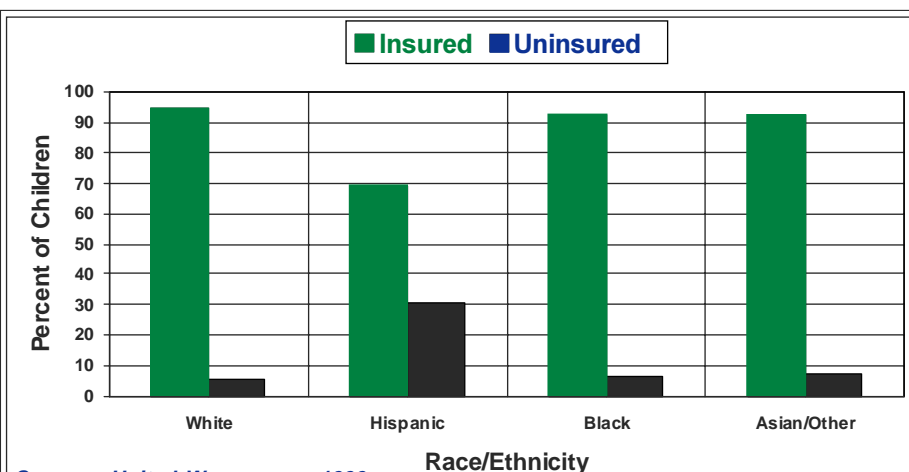
- A child who is currently eligible for but not enrolled in a government-supported health care coverage program (e.g. Medi-Cal or Healthy Families).
- A low-income adult who works for a small or medium sized employer which does not offer health care coverage or one that is not affordable to the employee.

People 18-34 years of age constitute the greatest proportion of uninsured. This age group accounts for nearly 40% of all uninsured. It is estimated that between 14 and 20 percent of children are uninsured. Among Hispanic children, it is estimated that between 26 and 31% of children are uninsured. In addition, it is estimated that there are more than 300,000 undocumented migrants residing in San Diego County, the majority of whom are likely uninsured. Financial and personal barriers exist in these communities and can limit access to health care.

Nearly one in four children in San Diego County are living at or below the poverty level. These children are likely to have poor nutrition, inadequate or unsafe housing, and insufficient health care. It is estimated that approximately 28% of the childhood population in San Diego County are without dental insurance coverage.

Results from the 1995 National Health Interview Survey indicated that persons with low household income were more likely to report fair or poor health status compared to those with greater levels of income.

Estimated Number of Children 18 and Under by Insurance Status, San Diego County, 1999



Source: United Way survey, 1999